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ABSTRACT

More effective guidance programs are imperative if disadvantaged, handicapped, and minority students are to realize their personal and career potential in this country. Presently these students are inhibited in their vocational development by cultural differences, values, language differences, limited academic achievement, and vocational motivation. Counselors can take various steps to help their special population clients overcome these problems. Three methods of alternative counseling have been developed which stress an understanding of the students' cultural differences; (1) systemic counseling for the culturally different; (2) transcendent counseling which tries to persuade the disadvantaged to alter their life style; and (3) stylistic counseling which takes into account the cultural-historical dimension. Recognizing the strengths of special populations can help counselors integrate these groups into the educational system and ultimately the work force. It is also necessary for educators to examine their own attitudes and behavior so that they do not allow themselves to limit the educational and vocational opportunities for all students. Specific recommendations are made for meeting the guidance needs of special population students, including the following: familiarization with relevant legislation; special program design; use of community resources; evaluation of vocational guidance programs; professional training for counselors within a multi-cultural context; and job placement and followup. (EL G)

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Information Series No. 145

GUIDANCE NEEDS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

written by

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1979

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Providing equal opportunity for special needs populations in educational and employment settings has become a major goal of our society in recent decades. This calls for expanded professional responsibilities and special training for guidance personnel, vocational educators, and other school personnel. To this end, the background, characteristics, and unique problems of specific special populations are examined in this paper. Recommendations are made for meeting the guidance needs of these special populations. The target populations discussed include the disadvantaged, handicapped, and those whose cultural background is different from that of the majority in this country. In particular, theories proposed by three counselor-educators are presented to assist counselors attempting to meet the needs of students from minority backgrounds.

"Guidance Needs of Special Populations" is one of a series of 16 papers produced during the first year of the National Center's knowledge transformation program. The 16 papers are concentrated in the four theme areas emphasized under the National Center contract: special needs subpopulations, sex fairness, planning, and evaluation in vocational education. The review and synthesis of research in each topic area is intended to communicate knowledge and suggest applications. Papers should be of interest to all vocational educators, including administrators, researchers, federal agency personnel, and the National Center staff.

The profession is indebted to Ms. Thelma C. Lennon for her scholarship in preparing the paper. Recognition is also due Dr. Nancy Pinson, Maryland Department of Education, Dr. Janet Heddesheimer, George Washington University, and Dr. Marion Johnson, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, for their critical review of the manuscript. Dr. Carol P. Kowle, research specialist, supervised the publication of the series. Ms. Jo-Ann Cherry coordinated editing and production.

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INTRODUCTION

Providing equal opportunities for special needs populations in educational and employment settings has become a major goal of our society in recent decades. This calls for new directions and expanded professional responsibilities for guidance personnel, vocational educators, and other school personnel.

In many cases instruction in certain decision-making skills such as self-assessment, choosing alternatives, and goal setting is lacking in the learning experiences of today's students. This is particularly true of special populations such as the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and those whose cultural background differs from that of the majority in this country, including many blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. The guidance needs of these special populations must receive high priority if they are to realize their personal and career potential. More effective guidance programs are imperative, especially in light of the fact that these populations are growing as this nation moves toward egalitarianism.

This movement toward egalitarianism is supported by the U.S. National Commission for Support of Public Schools, which states that the nation's broad educational mission is to insure, through effective leadership at the state and local levels, those learning experiences which are compatible with individual needs, interests, and capabilities which will lead to continued education and/or employment for all students. The Supreme Court decision of 1954 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 originally augmented the scope and broadened the commitment of public education's responsibility to the disadvantaged.

After the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1950s, the problem of equity for special populations was raised to the level of consciousness during the 1960s. According to Borow (1974), students during the 1960s were concentrating on individual development and self-improvement, and were making such statements as "recognize your uniqueness, tune in to your feelings, learn to think well of yourself, and discard masks and charades in favor of authenticity and of mutual sharing of inner experience with others" (p. 7). Since the 1960s, social, judicial, economic, and legislative forces have caused a re-examination of guidance, counseling, and instructional strategies. The influence of these forces has resulted in the enactment of the following legislation: the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142); the Education Amendments of 1976, Title II, Vocational Education (P.L. 94-482); Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-516); and civil rights legislation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) mandates a free appropriate public education for every handicapped individual, aged 3 to 18 (3 to 21 by 1980). Public Law 94-142 and similar legislation place a heavy responsibility with public education. Public Law 94-142 is permanent legislation and, like the Smith-Hughes Act (1914), the first vocation education legislation, is excluded from the requirement for periodic reauthorization. The implications of this legislation are extensive and have considerable impact on instructional and guidance personnel.

In regard to the responsibilities of public education, Pearl (1966) has stated that the educational system should provide each student with a wide range of career choices, and provide each student with the requisite intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to function in a complex society. Feldman (1967) has commented that although schools are responsible for preparing individuals for full participation in economic life, many special populations have not been equipped with the skills, competencies, sense of agency, or the positive self-concepts to develop a career and become effective citizens.

The failure of schools to relate curriculum more closely to the world of work has been a disservice to students from many levels, but particularly to the disadvantaged. A new approach is needed to bring education and work closer together. Guidance and counseling, manpower programs, and education in general are challenged to facilitate access to equal educational opportunity for special populations.

DEFINITIONS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Many definitions of special populations have been offered by past authors (Fantini and Weinstein, 1968; Klopf and Bowman, 1966; Riessman, 1962). Specifically, the special populations under consideration here include the handicapped, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, and those from different cultural backgrounds. Broadly defined, special populations include (Hobbs, 1976):

1. Persons whose educational skills are underdeveloped to the extent that they require some modification of usual school programs and procedures

2. Persons with developmental learning problems who are unable to make adequate progress in regular grades without supportive help

Special populations, therefore, are identified as those persons who have different sets of instructional and human support needs. These special needs, whether physical, emotional, social, or learning difficulties, require:

1. An identification of individual needs
2. Modification of guidance and instructional programs
3. Additional services to meet these needs

The common element in all definitions of special needs is the provision for additional services in order to facilitate the educational experience and insure individual success. The special needs populations which are the focus of this paper are described in the following sections.

Handicapped Students

The 1976 vocational education amendments define handicapped individuals as:

> Persons who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, health impaired, or persons with specific disabilities, who by reason thereof require special education and related services, and who because of their handicapping condition, cannot succeed in the regular vocational education program without special education assistance or who require modified vocational education programs. (Sec. 197.7)

The Guidelines for Public Schools from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped define handicapping conditions as follows (U.S. Office of Education, 1975):

Mentally Retarded - Individuals whose rate of intellectual development is significantly lower than the normal rate and whose potential for academic achievement is estimated to be markedly less than that expected of others with a normal rate of intellectual development.

Learning Disabled - Individuals who exhibit a disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. These processes may be manifested in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or simple computing.

Seriously Emotionally Disturbed - Individuals who suffer from psychiatric disturbances which limit their ability to govern their own behavior.

Orthopedically Handicapped - Individuals who are limited in self-mobility, sitting in the classroom, and/or using materials or equipment for learning because of muscular, skeletal, or neuromuscular impairment.

Visually Handicapped - Individuals who are severely limited in in their ability to see and may be either partially sighted or blind.

Hearing Impaired - Individuals who have a sense of hearing inadequate for success in learning situations.

Speech Impaired - Individuals who have speech patterns that differ noticeably from the normal. Speech disorders may be articulatory, vocal, stuttering, or derive from delayed speech and speech disorders associated with a cleft palate, hearing impairment, or cerebral palsy.

Other Health Impairment - Individuals who have limited strength, vitality, and alertness because of chronic health problems such as heart conditions, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, infectious hepatitis, infectious mononucleosis, asthma, hemophilia, epilepsy, leukemia, diabetes, and other chronic conditions.

Multihandicapped - Individuals who have a combination of handicapping conditions, each of which must be considered in planning or program modification.

Handicapped individuals may be further described as those who, because of permanent or temporary mental, physical, or emotional handicaps, need special education and support services.

Disadvantaged Students

The term "disadvantaged" has come into use in the implementation of programs under the Economic Opportunity Act. This term has been further defined in the vocational education amendments of 1968 as referring to students or trainees having academic, socioeconomic, cultural, or other disadvantages which prevent them from being successful in traditional or regular occupational programs. "Disadvantaged" is defined in Title II of the Education Amendments of 1976 as:

> Persons (other than handicapped persons) who have academic or economic disadvantages and who require special services, assistance or programs in order to enable them to succeed in vocational education programs. (Sec. 197.16)

Thus, according to recent vocational education legislation, students may be disadvantaged in terms of either their education or their socioeconomic status. As indicated above, culturally different students are often considered to be disadvantaged. This does not mean that all culturally different youth are disadvantaged.

Cultural differences are not defined in legislation, but the term "culturally different" appears in literature dealing with the counseling of minority students. In particular, counselors and educators concerned about meeting the needs of such groups as blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans have focused on the importance of understanding cultural differences (Gunnings, 1971, 1972, 1978; Harper and Stone, 1974; McFadden, 1976; Scherl and English, 1972; Sue, 1973; Vontress, 1969; Williams, 1974).

Models for counseling students from different cultural backgrounds have been presented by minority counselor educators. Such models have been developed with the recognition that those from different cultures have unique problems in relation to the cultural majority. These problems might be psychological or attitudinal, and may involve alienation or a sense of isolation. Other problems might be educational or related to an inability to speak or understand the dialect of the majority. The unique situation of students from different cultures is clarified by Groomes (1975) when he comments that minorities have different developmental needs as a result of their experiences, but have individual needs as well.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

In general, the special populations defined above have identifiable characteristics which determine their guidance and counseling needs. The handicapped and the socioeconomically disadvantaged may have a number of characteristics in common. Other characteristics may be unique to the particular group. In either case, counselors should be aware of these characteristics in order to deal appropriately with students from each group. The following lists of characteristics are provided to assist counselors in recognizing the unique problems of students from the target populations under discussion.

Handicapped Students

Handicapped students may have the following characteristics:

1. They may lack a sense of personal adequacy, self-worth, and dignity.
2. They may be disabled learners limited in the capacity to master basic communication and computational skills.
3. They may have limited mobility within the community and have little knowledge of public transportation, geography, institutions, and places of commerce and industry.
4. They may possess personal and social characteristics which interfere with the ability to function satisfactorily in a competitive work setting.
5. They may be affected by chronic illness and by sensory-motor defects which reduce the effective response to training and placement.
6. They may possess physical characteristics which can elicit rejection.
7. They may lack goal orientation, particularly in the area of occupational training.
8. They may have unrealistic ideas concerning appropriate occupational training.
9. They may experience a lack of exposure to worker models.

Disadvantaged Students

Disadvantaged students, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged and living in urban settings, may have the following characteristics (see Deutsch, 1962):

1. They may live in overcrowded home situations.

2. They may tend to stay within their immediate environment, which often lacks the stimulation needed for a healthy life.

3. They may have little experience with successful adult models.

4. They may have few personal experiences which are successful and be conditioned for failure.

5. They may lack the opportunity for membership in appropriate youth organizations.

6. They may lack money for clothing appropriate to weather conditions or teenage fashions.

7. They may receive an education which does not meet their need for occupational training and which frequently seems unrelated to their world.

8. They may experience discrimination and segregation.

Besides considering the general characteristics disadvantaged students may possess, counselors should be aware of the classroom behavior these students may exhibit. Disadvantaged students may demonstrate the following characteristics in the classroom:

1. Low-level reading ability
2. Limited formal vocabulary and poor speech construction and diction
3. Relative slowness in performing intellectual tasks
4. Poor health and poor health habits
5. A predisposition to regard themselves as failures and to fail as a result

Disadvantaged students have other learning problems as well. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are basic educational skills. Many disadvantaged students never master these skills in their early school years. The hopelessness in their homes and communities is reflected many times in the classroom. Because they do not read or understand easily, they cannot keep up with their classwork. By the time they reach high school, intelligence test scores, school marks, and teacher evaluations have designated them as slow learners, even though such a designation may not reflect their true mental abilities.

Students from different cultural backgrounds, including many blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans, may have or may have had the following characteristics:

1. They may be experientially disadvantaged.

2. They may be environmentally disadvantaged--economically, socially, and/or educationally handicapped.

3. They may be discriminated against and alienated.

4. They may be from different cultural backgrounds.

5. They may be without social and/or economic affluence as a result of denial, oppression, or apathy.

6. They may lack basic academic skills and appropriate work competencies.

7. They may exhibit a learning performance pattern consisting of a short attention span requiring a variety of activity and involvement.

8. They may experience a minimum amount of individual attention at home, school, or elsewhere.

9. They may be viewed as failures.

10. They may have a greater capacity to learn than they have exhibited.

11. They may be responsive to attempts to help them.

It is important to understand the attitudes of these students toward education in considering their guidance needs. According to the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (1970), these students view their educational experience in the following ways:

1. The school day is long and tedious.

2. The education they are receiving seems to lack relevance to their future life and needs.

3. The school system often fails to recognize and respect their culturally different backgrounds.

4. Some teachers lack an understanding of their special needs and problems.

5. Little or no special instruction and attention is provided to help them fit into the regular school programs.

6. Too much time is spent on discipline; staff members are occasionally involved in physical conflict with the students.

7. Too little time is given the type of counseling, encouragement, or other support they need to enter the world of work, which means that they leave school unprepared for a job. When these students encounter discrimination

or are unsuccessful in finding jobs because of their age, race, or poor educational background, they do not believe that returning to school will improve their situation.

Students from different cultural backgrounds may have an additional characteristic which impairs their academic performance and retards their integration into the mainstream of life in this country. Many times these students speak and understand a dialect other than standard English. Differences in dialect can create difficulties in reading, comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Language differences in the classroom can threaten effective teaching and learning.

Educators have expressed many points of view on the teaching of standard English in the classroom. The posture taken on the importance of standard English has serious consequences for students from different cultural backgrounds. Critics of the use of standard English question the need to help students enter a society in which standard English is natural, especially when the values of the society are uncertain (Fasold and Wolfram, 1970). Others take the position that all students should know when and how to use standard English, but should also be allowed to retain their original dialect. Educators who express the latter point of view indicate that teachers may learn about dialects as their students learn more about standard English. There is also a growing recognition that present teaching methods and materials may be inadequate to deal with the problems of nonstandard English. It is important for counselors and teachers alike to recognize the influence of nonstandard dialects spoken by minority students. Differences in dialect and cultural experiences can affect students' performance on tests and determine their academic placement. Tests often contain cultural questions. Although culturally referenced tests have been developed, a culture-free test does not exist.

Summary and Conclusions

Students from the special populations discussed here are likely to have personal, social and academic difficulties which result in low success rates in schooling and employment. Teachers and counselors alike must be sensitive to the individual and group needs of these special students. Certain characteristics common to all three groups deserve the counselor's attention. The handicapped and the disadvantaged often have a poor sense of self-worth, experience alienation from the majority, lack exposure to adequate role models, and lack proper academic and job skill.

Perhaps the most serious disadvantage from this author's perspective is the lack of basic academic skills, particularly communication skills. Many times, as indicated, poor academic skills on the part of disadvantaged students are a result of difficulties in reading and understanding standard English. Difficulty with standard English becomes a major factor in students' ability to perform well on oral and written tests. Poor test results, in turn, may mean that students of normal intelligence are improperly labeled as slow learners and a pattern of academic failure is established.

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds often score lower on intelligence tests than do other students, because the language of the intelligence tests is not understood. Yet many of these students are bright. It is becoming apparent that no single test can provide sufficient information on a student. Test scores should be accepted as indicating fixed levels of performance or potential. Furthermore, tests should be refined to provide fair evaluations of students from many different backgrounds.

Counselors must be especially alert to the inherent weaknesses in standardized test data on special populations because such data often constitute the only information a counselor may have on students. A number of factors may contribute to poor test scores which do not reflect the true ability of handicapped and disadvantaged students. These factors may include:

1. Poor test-taking skills
2. Excessive anxiety
3. Poor motivation to perform well on tests
4. Little concern for speed
5. Poor understanding of test instructions
6. Lack of familiarity with the format of the test
7. Poor relationship with the examiner

Awareness of the lack of basic academic skills and test taking ability on the part of special populations has resulted in a strong federal commitment to funding for compensatory education in recent years. At the same time, counselors and teachers must become attuned to the needs of these students, and help develop their basic skills by building motivation, and making education more relevant to the students' own lives. Taylor (1974) provides suggestions for the improvement of language skills particularly in students from disadvantaged backgrounds:

> Primary focus should be placed on the interrelatedness of language skills, with major emphasis on the development of oral language--what a child can say, a child can write. What a child can write, a child can read. As increasing attention is focused on reading, it becomes the school's obligation to provide students with books and other materials which they can read and which they will read. Unless reading is functional and relevant, it has no value. Developing taste is of no consequence until reading skills have been "mastered." Of great significance is awareness of the fact that teaching grammar as a means for language improvement is of little or no value, in spite of the great emphasis placed upon its importance.
>
> More opportunities should be afforded for students of all ages to experience interaction with those who speak with more maturity than they do. This interaction should be frequent, structured, and systematic--and with overtones of humor as often as possible. Older students in many schools are filling this role of "tutor-conversationalist" quite effectively.

All teachers should do something positive in the area of language development. The good work of the language arts teacher may be easily wiped out by a competent, well-intentioned teacher in another class, who does not recognize or understand the problems associated with language development. There are many things which all teachers can do to strengthen positive language habits, even though they themselves are not experts in language. (p. 56)

MEETING THE GUIDANCE NEEDS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Wrenn (1966) has defined the role of the helping professions in meeting the guidance needs of special populations. He comments that a proper school guidance program should bring to a student an increased understanding of the educational and vocational information essential to wise choices; make use of psychological measurement and careful records for both teacher and counselor understanding on the one hand, and for interpretation of the student to him/herself on the other hand; make use of school social workers to provide adjustments between home and school; bring in school psychologists for assistance to teachers and students in learning tasks; and assist students in finding part-time and full-time jobs.

Definitions of Guidance and Terms Relating to Guidance

To facilitate an understanding of the role of guidance and counseling in meeting the needs of special populations, the following definitions are provided:

Guidance is an integral part of the educational process and involves a comprehensive program designed to assist all individuals in the acquisition of life skills. It involves a program provided under the leadership of professional counselors, involving teachers and resource personnel, to assist individuals in education, community, and other settings in their educational, vocational, and personal-social development. A guidance program represents an organized effort on the part of a school or agency to help individuals develop their potential. Guidance programs may include, but are not limited to, counseling, information, placement, appraisal, follow-up, and research.

Counseling is a component of a school's guidance services. It is a process conducted by a professional counselor in one-to-one or group settings to assist individuals in problem-solving, planning, or carrying out an activity. Among the activities students may undertake are self-exploration, self-understanding, personalizing and prioritizing of goals, and identifying and selecting alternatives for reaching goals.

Follow-up is a process that should reveal the attitudes, learnings, and skills which students have acquired as a result of the experiences and training provided in education programs and the broader environment. It allows the counselor to help the student identify available options.

Follow-through is the use made of the information acquired through various follow-up activities for upgrading programs, revising programs or designing new ones, and improving curriculum. It also is related to tasks or responsibilities which counselors and guidance workers may undertake in assisting individuals with their vocational development.

Placement involves the movement by a student from educational and/or vocational training to job or postsecondary institution. Legislation has mandated that this function be made available to all vocational students, including handicapped and disadvantaged persons.

A counselor is a trained professional whose duties include: helping students or clients to understand themselves and their opportunities in order that they can formulate plans, decisions, and concepts of self to lead a more satisfying and productive life, and helping these individuals implement their decisions and plans.

Vocational and Career Guidance for Special Populations

To meet the vocational and career guidance needs of special populations, counselors need to move beyond the traditional one-on-one counselor-client relationship and become involved in the school and community. Counselors must foster positive interpersonal relationships among students, teachers other school personnel, and parents. Assuming this point of view, counselors become advocates, consultants, negotiators, confronters, advice-givers, and manipulators in behalf of their clients (Gunnings, 1976). Counselors also need to become knowledgeable in such areas as motivation, personality, and learning theory. In this manner they can assist students in dealing with life beyond the school and prepare them for appropriate roles in the work world.

Integrating special populations into the educational system places a particular burden on vocational education and career education. Vocational and career education provide special students with the information and skills to perform successfully in the work force.

Hoyt (1976) explains the purpose of career education programs for special populations:

> Career education seeks to make work possible, meaningful and satisfying for all individuals. To do so for handicapped persons demands, first of all, that we regard their right to choose from among the widest possible set of opportunities equally as important as for any other individual. We seem too often to be satisfied when we have found something that a handicapped person can do. We should be dissatisfied until, and unless, we have explored, to the fullest extent, the total array of work that might be possible for a given handicapped person. To stop prior to reaching this point is being less than fair to the handicapped person and to the larger society. (p. 20)

Career preparation means helping special populations become integrated into the mainstream of life in this country. This emphasis on integration is consistent with Lance's (1976) analysis of the three stage development of special education:

1. Treatment through segregation and restriction of resources for survival for people called different

2. Caring for people regarded as different by providing resources required for their physical existence

3. Instructing people so that they may be incorporated into existing, dominant social systems

The emphasis of recent legislation is on the third stage, instructing students so that they may be incorporated into existing social systems.

Models for Counseling Special Populations

Unfortunately, the handicapped and disadvantaged students have not been entirely integrated into the mainstream of the educational system or the work world.

The present educational system is still not sufficiently meeting the needs of urban disadvantaged and minority children. According to Jones (1977), "for these children much of the cherished American dreams of equity, equality of educational opportunity and the pursuit of happiness are a cruel hoax" (p. 415). Gunnings (1976) further states that "the environment is the key factor in shaping people's attitudes, values, and beliefs" (p. 6). These students are not provided with the teaching and learning techniques, strategies, and programs that would offset the disadvantages imposed upon them by historical circumstances and environmental conditions.

Counselors can play a vital role in meeting this challenge. The degree of counselor or teacher effectiveness might be measured by the counselor's commitment, sensitivity, cultural awareness, positive regard, aggressiveness, and feeling of acceptance of the student. The urban school system needs to absorb racially and culturally diverse students while dealing with emotional and personality difficulties which interfere with learning on the part of these students. Unfortunately, the counselor or teacher may try to assist students with special needs in adjusting to the school while placing too much responsibility for change with the child (Costin, 1975). Alternative educational programs have been developed to reach the large number of students in the traditional school programs who are alienated, disruptive, or indifferent. These programs include open classrooms, schools without walls, and drop-in centers.

In particular, three models for alternative counseling of disadvantaged students have been developed by minority counselor educators. These models stress an understanding of the cultural differences many students experience in order to foster their ability to succeed in the larger culture.

The three models include systemic counseling, transcendent counseling, and stylistic counseling.

Systemic Counseling

Systemic counseling (Gunnings and Simpkins, 1972), a theoretical model for counseling the culturally different, is based on the following premises:

1. Informing the counselor to be sensitive to clients' feelings of resentment and hostility
2. Advocating positive attention in lieu of negative attention
3. Specializing in protecting the welfare of students against the forces of dehumanization
4. Insisting that the counselor be an advocate of his or her client
5. Involving the counselor as a consultant to students, teachers, and parents
6. Purporting that the counselor must be knowledgeable of the traditional system and its power base but, at the same time, must not be co-opted by it
7. Advancing the assumption that most problems formerly indicated to be client problems are, indeed, problems of the system
8. Stressing the integration of knowing, feeling, doing
9. Emphasizing the realignment of goals and priorities on the part of the client
10. Operating from a theoretical position which enables the counselor to assist in the growth and development of a human being
11. Helping the client to identify sources of societal power and sources for effective sponsorship of him or her
12. Supporting the notion that the counselor must not be so presumptuous about knowing better than the client what is best for him or her and thereby acting without the client's knowledge or consent

Transcendent Counseling

Transcendent counseling (Harper and Stone, 1974), a counseling theory and an intervention strategy for the disadvantaged, involves a learning process wherein the counselor employs teaching, motivating, and social modeling to persuade clients to alter their lifestyles. Transcendent counseling focuses on the following:

1. Prevention and therapy through training
2. Psychological and physical changes
3. Changing the client's lifestyle as opposed to behavior
4. Long-range change as opposed to short-range
5. Irreversible change as opposed to reversible change
6. The role of the counselor as teacher, social model, motivator (pp. 191-197)

Training modules emphasize two broad areas of development--physical and psychological. Modules on diet orientation, exercise, and productive work comprise the series on physical development, while modules on growth groups, orientation, and self-regulation comprise the series on psychological development.

Stylistic Counseling

The stylistic model of counseling the culturally different (McFadden, 1976) is based on three primary dimensions. Each subset within the three dimensions resembles parts of a three-tiered design. The foundation of stylistic counseling can be found in the cultural-historical dimension. The first and most fundamental part of the model represents the origin of an ethnic group's life in the United States. In order for a counselor to comprehend the values of the culturally different, it is imperative to acquire a basic understanding of the historical and cultural development of the particular group. The psycho-social dimension deals with the mental and sociological ingredients which support the formulation of culturally different behavior as adapted to cultural lifestyles in isolation or influenced by the dominant society. The third component of stylistic counseling is the scientific-ideological dimension. Race relations is a subset of this dimension. Counselors have to understand how, why, and when clients feel the need to become integrally and racially identified with their cultural group.

Some fundamental premises of the model for stylistic counseling include the following:

1. The counselor should, via reading and research, become cognizant of the parallels and diversities between ethnic minority and nonminority history and culture.

2. It is essentially impossible for a counselor to counsel minorities without understanding what they think, to what they aspire, and what problems they have.

3. The counselor should minimize the use of "I can't" and emphasize the use of "I can."

4. The counselor should help to build minds and self-images through the provision of successful experiences.

5. The black family is a survival mechanism for black people.

6. First impressions are lasting; if counselors give the impression that they do not care, then culturally different clients will not trust them. (p.28)

Concerns in Counseling Special Populations

In working with disadvantaged and minority students particularly, counselors must first recognize the needs and characteristics of the group, including the cultural backgrounds of the community, and the effects of poverty on individual students in each cultural group.

To deal appropriately with special needs populations, whether they are handicapped or disadvantaged, the counselor should:

1. Show interest in the student by exhibiting patience, being available when needed, and not giving up when understanding does not develop in a short space of time.

2. Establish rapport with the student. This may involve working on home problems with parents, being realistic in advice, and helping the student to develop his or her own values.

3. Develop skill in "hearing" nonverbal communications. This comes from working directly with the student, seeking knowledge of home environment, and awareness of the influences which affect the student's outlook.

4. Work with the teachers to discover the student's qualities which should be encouraged and developed.

5. Work with teachers to improve the student's self-concept.

6. Be perceptive to preventive action that should be taken to forestall punitive action.

7. Work with teachers in formulating a curriculum which the student can handle.

8. Help to supervise students who are on work-study programs, assist them to adjust to their work duties, and keep in contact with their employers.

9. Provide guidance and counseling for out-of-school young people, both graduates and dropouts.

10. Utilize group counseling where feasible and applicable.

11. Have an intensive program of individual counseling where feasible.

12. Assist in job placement.

13. Establish contact with social and community agencies and refer students or their families to those agencies which can handle their specific problems.

14. Participate in inservice training courses.

Recognizing the strengths of special populations is one important way in which counselors can help to integrate these students into the educational system and ultimately the work force. Gordon (1963) has indicated that disadvantaged students have learning abilities such as those below which are often unrecognized or untapped in the schools:

1. They are creative, motivated, and proficient in areas where their interests lie.

2. They are capable of working well and hard on a specific task or assignment which has a purpose for them, for example, taking courses which will result in a job or scholarship leading to a career.

3. They have a capacity for close and loyal personal relationships. This is especially true of relationships with their peers.

4. Unusual experiences make a deep impression on them, as they do on all children.

5. The mental associations they make with familiar objects often differ from those usually made by the general public.

6. They may be slow to make nonpersonal references. They believe only what they can see, feel, and prove.

Identifying and working with students who cannot cope with the demands of school is not a job for the counselor, the administrator, or the teacher alone. Individual concern and attention to the student, together with skillful guidance and counseling, can mean the difference between a continued sense hopelessness and the desire to give education another chance.

SUMMARY

The federal government has provided leadership in the allocation of compensatory and vocational education resources to the states. Recent legislation has been sensitive to the limited opportunities of various special populations, including the handicapped and disadvantaged.

As a result of this legislation, educators have the responsibility to reform professional training, accreditation and school practice in providing more effective help to special needs populations. Educators can make a contribution in removing the barriers to opportunities for all students. They need to examine their attitudes and behavior and the manner in which these may limit their effectiveness in assessing vocational and educational opportuntities for all students. Commitment and involvement in self-examination should increase the educator's awareness in assessing the behavior of others.

Special populations often require assistance in social development. For example, it is the social adjustment of handicapped workers, as reflected by their relationships with coworkers and supervisors, which will determine how successful they will be in retaining employment.

The schools face a significant challenge in educating all children, including those with special needs. Educators alone cannot resolve the problems of special populations. Increased financial support must come from the federal, state, and local governments. This support must include planning as well as financing.

The following are suggestions for teachers and counselors as they attempt to facilitate the educational growth of special populations.

Classroom Teachers

1. Develop a working knowledge of guidelines, programs, and services related to special needs students to facilitate referral, participation in school-based committee functions, development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and parental involvement.

2. Be cognizant of individual abilities of students and accept them as individuals who can and want to learn.

3. Allow for essential modification of methods, materials, and curricula to provide for successful classroom experiences by special needs students.

4. Develop classroom experiences based on performance level. Expectations for performance should relate to information contained within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and based on daily observation.

5. Cooperate and support planning efforts and implementation of integrated services and programming for special needs students.

6. Provide appropriate feedback to students, parents, and personnel on student needs, performance, and need for reassessment of placement or the IEP.

Counselors

1. Develop a knowledge base of information and participate in activities related to referral/evaluation/screening such as placement, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), parental involvement, due process, and confidentiality.

2. Provide coordinated opportunities for special needs students to observe and explore job opportunities and realistically relate to direct involvement in appropriate vocational training and job placement.

3. Provide leadership, and, when appropriate, direct involvement in selection and administration of batteries of tests dealing with interests and vocational potential.

4. Provide assistance to the school-based placement committee and the student in selecting and scheduling appropriate vocational involvement.

5. Coordinate involvement of special needs students in in-school work experiences and community placement with other school personnel.

6. Coordinate involvement of special needs students in extracurricular activities with other school personnel.

7. Assist personnel directly responsible for special needs students in the development of classroom guidance activities and act as a resource for obtaining appropriate materials and information.

8. Coordinate with other personnel directly involved with special needs students to secure or maintain support services provided by other agencies.

9. When appropriate, meet with parents of special needs students to provide information requested that may be in addition to information provided at the evaluation, follow-up, or development of IEPs.

10. Provide special needs students with the same services as other students.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The guidance needs of special populations suggest that the educational system should examine its present values, methods, and techniques in providing programs and services for target groups as defined in this paper. The literature has revealed factors that inhibit special needs students in their vocational development, such as cultural differences, values, language differences, limited academic achievement, and vocational motivation.

The following are some exemplary approaches to resolving these inhibiting factors.

1. Project SERVE (St. Paul, Minnesota) is a vocationally-oriented high school program designed for students with special learning and behavioral problems, as well as other special needs. The project model focuses on the normalization and integration of handicapped students as they move into the mainstream of secondary and postsecondary education and subsequently into a competitive work environment.

2. Project PRICE (University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri) is designed to develop a methodology which school systems can use to educate school, community, and family personnel to provide more relevant instruction and supportive services to retarded students.

3. Vocational Village (Portland, Oregon) is a program offering personalized career-oriented education to persons aged 14-21. It serves high school dropouts, those referred by the courts, and those transferred from regular high schools because of physical, mental, or emotional problems. The program helps economically and educationally disadvantaged youth by offering guidance and counseling, supportive programs, and interdisciplinary curriculum of home and career-oriented education designed for meeting individual needs, placement, and follow-up services.

4. Career Development Center (Syossett, New York) is an alternative high school program for persons aged 15-21. It is designed to help special needs students who cannot adjust to or function in their local schools. Students return to their own schools when they have developed a capacity for independent living.

5. Project Narder (Fullerton, California) is designed for teenage handicapped educable mentally retarded, and orthopedically handicapped high school students with job entry skills. The project focuses on initial job placement as well as placement in higher-level jobs not traditionally available for these students.

6. Project MIND--Meeting Individual Needs Daily (Westport, Connecticut) provides career education for special needs students aged 15 years and older who are high risk and have displayed a low potential in relation to finishing junior high school because of truancy, academic failure, behavior problems, and court records. Students attend a vocational school for one-half day and, subsequently, earn a diploma.

More work needs to be done to develop programs and practices for disadvantaged, handicapped, and minority students. Staff limitations restrict the use of existing practices and the development of expertise in working with special populations.

School systems should examine the broad concept of alternative public education as it is emerging in this country. A number of viable educational alternatives are designed for persons with different learning styles. Alternative schools, in general, share the following characteristics which relate positively to equal educational opportunities:

1. A close student-staff relationship is developed on the basis of mutual trust.

2. Academic and structural decision making is shared by a community of students, parents, and staff.

3. The human and physical resources of the surrounding city become valuable instructional tools.

4. The traditional curriculum and educational program undergo a major overhaul with the elimination of or a drastic change in irrelevant subject matter distinctions, grading procedures, and age divisions. This facilitates learning based on individual needs and concerns.

5. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds work together effectively.

This writer agrees with Goodman (1964), who observes that, as educators, "Our philosophic aim must be to get each one out of his/her isolated class into one humanity" (p. 46).

The following guidelines and/or recommendations for meeting the guidance needs of special populations are suggested:

1. Vocational educators and guidance personnel should familiarize themselves with laws concerning special needs populations and formulate strategies for involvement.

2. New programs must be designed or existing programs must be modified to meet individual needs of students.

3. Vocational administrators and guidance personnel should make greater use of parents, industry, business, and public resources in the community. Teachers and support personnel must know how to use these resources effectively.

4. Vocational guidance programs should be evaluated continuously through the use of follow-up and revised accordingly.

5. Educators must insure that prospective professionals are provided with opportunities to be directly involved with students from varied cultural, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

6. Professional training for counselors should occur within a multi-cultural context. Special attention should be given to the counseling interventions being taught for use with culturally different populations.

7. Teachers and other school personnel should participate in staff development that will enhance their understanding of the specific characteristics of their students, since the home and community environments often retard the educational achievement of disadvantaged students.

8. Special needs students should be provided with individualized and personalized study in which learning can proceed at independent rates.

9. Guidance personnel should involve teachers in the guidance and counseling process and insure that the school staff become familiar with special techniques in working with special needs students.

10. Performance testing and subjective evaluation procedures should be incorporated into the standardized testing program, since the usual methods of testing and test interpretations may be inadequate for evaluating special needs students.

11. For all students, motivation is the key to the learning process. Teachers should utilize various incentives for involvement of the special needs student in the learning process.

12. A system of referral should be established for those students who appear to have major psychological, physical, or social problems.

13. Job placement and follow-up should be major aspects of the vocational program for special needs populations.

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